Minutes: Official Meeting of the Graduate and Professional Student Senate
Finance and Budget Committee
February 6th, 2011

I. Call to Order
Meeting called to order at 4:36 pm.

II. Roll Call
Chairperson, GPSS Treasurer Colin Goldfinch
Secretary, Senator Kristen Hosey, Nursing
Senator Catherine Mangum, Jackson School
Senator Colin Bateson, Mechanical Engineering
Senator Kiran Alluru, Aeronautics and Astronautics
Senator Ted Chen, Bioengineering
Rene Singleton

III. Approval of the Agenda
Senator Bateson motioned to approve the agenda.
Senator Alluru seconded.
Motion unanimously approved by the committee

IV. Approval of the Minutes
Senator Mangum motioned to approve the minutes.
Senator Bateson seconded.
Motion unanimously approved by the committee.

V. Consideration of the Special Allocations

a) Persian Circle (New Year)
This organization presented an application in December that was tabled. Many changes were made to their event, but they did not re-submit an application so the specifics were not clear. Despite not getting alcohol they were still asking for $1,000. Rene Singleton asked about the location, because many items from the old application (including the location and time) have been changed. Also, since a person who was no longer a student was organizing the event, the representatives that were meeting with the SAO and GPSS were not clear on the elements of this event. Senator Chen motioned to table the discussion until next week when the representative will be more prepared and the room situation can be sorted out. Senator Bateson approved. Motion unanimously approved by the committee.

b) Iraq Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP)

Sara Lippek represented.
Iraq Refugee Assistance Project is an RSO project sponsored by the School of Law. They pair law students with pro-bono attorneys. The IRAP IS a new chapter of a national organization. They provide professional development with students who are involved, as well as public education that is related to refugee rights. This event is a public talk called “Broken Promises”, and the speaker is Rebecca Heller, an adjunct professor from Yale. An all-day training is planned to work with students collaborating with the organization, which will be held on-campus and open to people who are interested. Mostly attendance will be from the Law, Jackson and Evans Schools but anyone can come. Senator Chen asked about their other sources of funding. Other sources of funding include: partnering with attorney’s firms for the attorney training; and the International Law Society has donated refreshments; and, baking sales. The talk will be recorded. Senator Hosey clarified with Treasurer Goldfinch and Ms. Lippek that Heller would not be speaking at any other events in Seattle and therefore could receive travel funding.

Senator Chen motioned to approve funding for $400. Senator Hosey seconded. Motion unanimously approved by the committee.

VI. Consideration of Departmental Allocations
   a) Biology

Senator Esmine from Biology represented.

The biology department has a retreat every year, and they are going to Wallace Falls State Park this year. They currently have 43 students registered to attend out of about 85 graduate students from the program. Interest within the department was assessed using catalyst surveys and emails. The cost is currently $90 to stay at the event, so funding is requested for travel to the park. The reason for the retreat is to greet incoming students for next year, as well as to host a poster session and PowerPoint presentation of research. The retreat will happen 24-26th of February.

Senator Alluru motioned to approve funding for $350. Senator Bateson seconded. Motion unanimously approved by the committee.

VII. Meeting with the Restructuring Task Force

Senator Alluru was excused from the meeting but will answer the questions via email.

1. Are there any requirements for being on your committee? If so, what are they?
   Senator Mangum said “listening skills”.
   Senator Bateson said, “Time requirements”
   Treasurer Goldfinch stated that the scheduling is the hardest requirement for F&B; skills are not necessarily important;
Rene Singleton said that members have to have patience and the ability to hear, and stretch the money to compliment the whole campus and the needs of students. Senator Chen said, “You have to ask the right questions.” Senator Bateson reiterated that the $$ is there to be spent. Senator Chen said the members have to know “what is a sound amount to be approved.” Treasurer Goldfinch mentioned that event-planning experience does help. Senator Chen said that if an event turns out really badly it’s our name too.

2. What are your committee’s most important tasks? (Top 3-5)
   Senator Chen said that for allocations it is to allocate the money and to “be wise and make sound financial judgments” and he said that for the budget to make sure that we are using the money appropriately. Treasurer Goldfinch said that budget oversight is a function of the F&B Committee as well and F&B can marginally change budget lines.

   *The most important tasks were decided by the committee to be: Allocations Approval; Budget Management; Budget Approval; Supporting the Treasurer

3. What are your committee’s most time-consuming tasks? Please include approximate time breakdown for each task. (Top 3-5)
   Senator Mangum said “tabling items” and “listening to them talk.” Senator Bateson said that meetings are the most time consuming. Treasurer Goldfinch and Senator Hosey agreed that extra items outside of the meetings – putting meetings together, paperwork, preparation are the most time consuming and that different times throughout the year will determine the workload, for instance Treasurer Goldfinch exampled new staff training like with the new OM. Treasurer Goldfinch also said that potentially we could leverage the SharePoint site and that he can see the difficulty in members being more involved in the paperwork process, even though more involvement by members was suggested. Senator Hosey agreed.
   Rene Singleton said that “Supporting the Treasurer” was important and should be added to the question 2 list (above).
   Senator Hosey said that once the SharePoint system has been streamlined the process would be a little bit better for the process of special allocations. Committee members agreed that meetings: avg 1.5 hours for committee; and that the Fall quarter doesn’t tend to be as much work.
   Prep: Senator Hosey said it’s about 2-3 hours prep/follow-up. Treasurer Goldfinch stated that scheduling: 1hour/wk

4. What are the top 5 problems your committee encounters?
   Senator Mangum said “Lack of understanding of what we do”
Treasurer Goldfinch said that the first thing to do (in regard to Senator Mangum’s comment) would be to come up with a 1pg paper about the roles, responsibilities, funding and spending rules, roles of the budget, etc for F&B members

Senator Bateson said a “Good description of budget items” would be helpful

Senator Chen said that coordination between ASUW would be good

Rene Singleton mentioned a day so that the directors can talk might improve that

Treasurer Goldfinch said –regarding coordination and keeping committee members informed – that there is no way to codify making sure we are in touch with ASUW

Rene Singleton said “you’ve been better than others”

It was determined that w can’t really make a by-law

Senator Bateson asked, “What are you trying to accomplish? Can we solve this with a good form or database?”

Treasurer Goldfinch replied that hopefully the SharePoint system will help with this process, but interpersonal interactions are a little bit different

Senator Bates asked if there was big turnover or problems with retention?

Senator Mangum said no one advertises or talks about being a senator until the second year

Rene Singleton said there was a senator that was on the committee for 4 years and that this committee sometimes has people come back

Senator Goldfinch asked “what did you think you were signing up for?”

Senator Bateson said “I thought this was something I could do well” – he had been on the other end of the decision-making process;

Senator Mangum said “I thought this was exactly what it would be like” and this would be helpful

Senator Hosey said she “wanted to know where the money was going” and figure out what GPSS was

Rene Singleton mentioned that it would be nice to have a formal recognition of all the volunteers “for you to take with you to recognize the time put into the committee” – she doesn’t know what that would look like for the future – “something to take with you when you go”; something to enhance your own professional development

5. How can your committee be improved? (some items mentioned above)

Rene Singleton said “It depends on the personalities”; she mentioned that one year a student didn’t want to fund anything and everyone else wanted to give the money away and how that impacted the committee. She said the personality of the Treasurer is important.

Senator Mangum asked, “Is it beneficial to have certain schools involved?”

Rene Singleton answered, No, except for that one guy most people are excited from different departments because you get to hang out and learn from other departments about what they are doing. She said SharePoint would probably be the best system to share what you do. She also said that maybe having a relaxed orientation together without feeling rushed might help the committee.

Treasurer Goldfinch said “we made an orientation for staff” and it could be adaptable to F&B
Senator Bateson said, he’d like to see that on the website so that I’d know exactly what I was getting into, and used the terms “pumped” and “stoked” to relay his excitement.

6. How can your tasks be improved or made more efficient? (Some mentioned above)
   “SharePoint” unanimously agreed upon
   Treasurer Goldfinch suggested, “appointing a senator to report out on a quarterly basis to get senators to interact with the committee”
   Rene Singleton said that would work if officers gave larger, not redundant comments?
   Senator Mangum said that it be good if they provided information of what schools got funding for
   Senator Bateson would like to know what other departments are doing
   Senator Goldfinch said “this was brought up in our meeting with senators” and that they wanted to know what others are doing, and senators don’t know what their role is
   Senator Bateson said it’d be nice to compare proposals to something else – an example was given to have an idea about how much a DJ is?
   Treasurer Goldfinch said we could definitely send out applications in advance to committee members
   Senator Mangum asked about the DJ example and if this is the only guy in town?
   And that “we want to see their breakout cost upfront”
   Senator Bateson said we don’t see a lot of supporting documentation for these events
   Treasurer Goldfinch said we can probably work with the SAO officers on the breakdown of items “in general, rooms on campus costs ...” and if we were doing a rotating “primary reviewer” then we could get standard documentation about variable vs. fixed-cost items
   Senator Mangum said they (the applicants) should be doing more work than we should be
   Senator Bateson said most of these allocations don’t really require a new perspective, but it should be pretty quick to allocate funding based on this (the application)
   Treasurer Goldfinch asked how could we get senators to interact more with the budget? Something more hands-on?
   Senator Mangum said “I don think there is a way to do this” unless they are on a committee – a lot are there (at Senate meetings) because they have to be – “I don’t think pushing the point makes sense”
   Treasurer Goldfinch clarified, “I meant senators on the committee”
   Senator Mangum retracted her statement but no committee members answered the question regarding the budget.

7. Is recruitment and retention of committee members an issue for your committee? If so, do you have ideas how to resolve this problem?
Treasurer Goldfinch stated “not too bad” he said, “what’s the biggest barrier to retention is scheduling”
Senator Bateson asked if more people, more possibilities?
Treasurer Goldfinch responded, “I guess we can have variable meeting times”
Senator Hosey said, “I think Rene’s idea could be good”
Senator Bateson said, “maybe an event”
Treasurer Goldfinch said that with such high turnover...gave an example in his undergrad, “we needed to change the bylaws” (and that this was not necessarily sustainable) and that so much of organizational performance is cultural. He asked, “how do you create a better culture around stuff?” He said that “this assessment is start to that”
Senator Bateson restated having an event more like a party

8. What else should we know?
No one mentioned anything else.

VIII. Announcements

The next meeting for F&B will be next Monday.

IX. Adjournment

Senator Hosey moved to adjourn.
Senator Bateson seconded the motion.
Motion unanimously approved by the committee.

Meeting adjourned at 6:07pm